

U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE COMMISSIONED CORPS



HISTORY:

Protecting and advancing the health of our Nation's people and contributing to the delivery of health care worldwide is very important work and the main task of the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS). The PHS is a principal part of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The PHS is comprised of the principal health agencies of the Federal Government and oversees some of the largest public health programs in the world today. It is comprised of approximately 6,000 commissioned officers and 45,000 civil service employees. The PHS can trace its origin to 1798 under President John Adams, who first recognized the Federal Government's role in protecting and assuring the health of its people.

The PHS Commissioned Corps is an "all officer" organization comprised entirely of health professionals. It is one of the seven Uniformed Services of the United States. Others are the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and the Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. As one of the seven Uniformed Services, the Commissioned Corps of the PHS is granted benefits from several sources including: the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Federal statutes.

MISSION:

The mission of the Commissioned Corps is to provide highly-trained and mobile health professionals who carry our programs to promote the health of the Nation, understand and prevent disease and injury, assure safe and effective drugs and medical devices, deliver health service to Federal beneficiaries and furnish health expertise in time of war or other national or international emergencies.

Officers are currently commissioned in 11 professional categories representing the breadth of health care professionals: Physicians, Dentists, Nurses, Engineers, Scientists, Sanitarians, Veterinarians, Pharmacists, Dietitians, Therapists (Physical, Occupational, Speech, Audiology) and Health Services (Social Work, Podiatrists, Optometrists, Physician Assistants, Health Care Administrators, Computer Scientists, Clinical Psychologists, Medical Technologists, Dental Hygienists, Medical Records Administrators, Statisticians and others).

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

To be eligible for consideration for appointment to the PHS Commissioned Corps an applicant must meet the following criteria:

1. U.S. Citizenship
2. Must enter on duty by the age of 44.
Exceptions: Active Duty time is credited for the number of years the age exceeds 44.
The Surgeon General determines that the applicant possesses exceptional qualifications not readily available in the Corps.
In the case of a Reserve Corps officer, the commissioned corps has been declared by the President to be a military service.
3. All applicants for appointment to the PHS Commissioned Corps must undergo a medical examination and be found medically qualified prior to appointment.
4. An applicant must have completed an academic or professional degree program in a qualifying health discipline from an accredited program in an approved school offering the appropriate educational program as may be specified in the category criteria of specific disciplines involved.
5. An applicant must possess a current and unrestricted license, or other professional certificate or credentials in a State or a national certifying agency.

STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES:

JUNIOR and SENIOR COMMISSIONED OFFICER STUDENT TRAINING and EXTERN PROGRAM: COSTEP

History of COSTEP:

- 1948: the USPHS established a summer employment program for medical students
- 1955: Other health disciplines were added to the program for participation
- 1956: "COSTEP" was formally established

Intent of COSTEP:

- Introduce health disciplines for potential PHS careers
- Provides hands on knowledge of PHS and it's activities. If assigned to the Bureau of Prisons the student will receive hands on training in correctional medicine, policies and procedures
- Enables student to enhance educational background

Benefits of COSTEP:

- Opportunity to experience work in a PHS agency or affiliate
- Opportunity to consider the challenge of a professional future with the USPHS
- Establishes a link between PHS and the educational institution
- Student becomes a member of an invaluable work force
- Opportunity to form relationships while working with professional role models and mentors

Information and Opportunities for Junior Costep: 1-800-279-1605 USPHS Officer Information Line.

For Bureau of Prisons opportunities as a either a Junior or Senior Costep, applications and/or information, please contact: **1-800-800-2676 x136 or x169.**

JUNIOR COSTEP PARTICIPANT OVERVIEW

The Junior COSTEP provides students with an opportunity to become acquainted with the organization and mission of the United States Public Health Service (PHS) and with health-related career opportunities in various participating agencies.

Junior COSTEP participants are commissioned as Ensigns (pay grade 0-1) in the Commissioned Corps of the U. S. Public Health Service. Assignments may range for **31 to 120 days** throughout the year and are scheduled to be convenient with college enrollment.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for appointment to the Junior COSTEP program, an interested student must:

I. Have completed at least 1 year of study in medical, dental, or veterinary school; or have completed at least 2 years of study in a professionally accredited baccalaureate program in one of the following disciplines: dietetics, engineering, medical record administration, physician assistant training, nursing, pharmacy, sanitary science, computer science, occupational therapy or physical therapy; or be enrolled in a master's or doctoral program in a health-related field.

II. Expect to return to college or to a post-graduate training program in a commissionable profession immediately following participation in the COSTEP.

III. Be in a program of study accredited by an appropriate accrediting body.

IV. Be free of any obligation or responsibility that would conflict with extended active duty as a commissioned officer in the PHS (e.g., not be a member of a reserve or an active duty component of any other uniformed service).

V. Qualify for appointment in the PHS. This includes being a U.S. citizen, under 44 years of age, and able to meet the physical standards of the Corps.

APPLICATION DEADLINE DATES

Applications for the 2001 Summer Junior COSTEP will be accepted throughout the year. Even though there are not deadlines for receiving applications, those applicants whose applications are received by Friday, December 29, 2000 will be ensure timely processing. For applications, please access the Division of Commissioned Personnel web site: <http://dcp/psc.gov> and follow the link for Commissioned Corps Web Site and click on 'Application' or call: 1-877-463-6327, select option #1, dial 43452.

SERVICE OBLIGATION

Participants in the Junior COSTEP program incur **NO OBLIGATION** for future service in the U.S. Public Health Service or the selecting agency.

SALARY

Junior COSTEP participants will make *approximately* \$2,300 per month (this includes base pay \$1838, quarters allowance \$387, and subsistence allowance \$157). Normal tax deductions will apply to the base salary, however, the quarters and subsistence allowances are non-taxable. Persons with prior active duty or reserve military service will earn more. The student will be reimbursed for travel to and from the assignment site.

SENIOR COSTEP PARTICIPANT OVERVIEW

The Senior COSTEP program was established to attract qualified students in accredited health care programs into the Commissioned Corps and service in the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS).

Effective the first day of formal studies for the last academic year, the selectee will be called to "active duty for training." The student will be paid the salary of an Ensign(0-1) for that year.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for appointment to the Senior COSTEP program, an interested student must:

- I. Be a citizen of the United States; under age 44.
- II. Meet the medical fitness standards prescribed for appointment and active duty as a career officer.
- III. Be enrolled in good standing in an accredited school of medicine, osteopathy, nursing, physician assistant training, medical records administration, pharmacy, sanitary science, computer science, dietetics, occupational therapy, physical therapy, dentistry, or engineering; be eligible to enroll in the senior or final year of that school; and begin formal studies required as part of the curriculum for the senior or final year on the date of entry on active duty.
- IV. Agree in writing to serve on active duty as a commissioned officer with PHS for twice the period of training sponsored by PHS as stated in Section F of the Commissioned Corps Personnel Manual.
- V. Be free of any obligation or commitment that would conflict with extended active duty as a commissioned officer in PHS (e.g., not be a member of a reserve or active duty component of any other uniformed service).
- VI. Agree to waive any entitlement they may have to financial assistance (stipend or scholarship) in their final year of study other than assistance from the Senior COSTEP.

Applications for the 2001-2002 Senior COSTEP will be accepted throughout the year. Even though there are not deadlines for receiving applications, those applicants whose applications are received by Friday, December 29, 2000 will be ensure timely processing. For applications, please access the Division of Commissioned Personnel web site: <http://dcp/psc.gov> and follow the link for Commissioned Corps Web Site and click on 'Application' or call: 1-877-463-6327, select option #1, dial 43360.

SERVICE OBLIGATION

The Senior COSTEP participant incurs a **two-for-one** commitment. For every month that the selecting agency funds the student during the final year of study, a two-month obligation for service in that agency is incurred.

SALARY

Senior COSTEP participants will receive pay and allowances of an Ensign (0-1) of approximately \$2,300 per month (includes base pay, basic allowance for housing, and subsistence allowance). Normal tax deductions will apply to the base salary, however, the basic allowance for housing and subsistence allowance are non-taxable. Persons with prior active duty or reserve military service will earn more. The student will be reimbursed for travel to and from the assignment site. Graduates are promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Junior Grade (0-2) with monthly pay and allowances of over \$2,500 plus benefits. PharmD students are promoted to the rank of Lieutenant (0-3).

OTHER STUDENT/EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

For National Health Service Corps Scholars, the Bureau of Prisons is an agency in which the obligation to the Government may be repaid. Many but not all BOP facilities are designated as pay back sites. Scholarship recipients may apply to the BOP as either a civil servant or as a USPHS Commissioned Corps officer. Application eligibility still applies for both personnel systems. For more information on the National Health Service Corps please call 1-800-221-9393 or visit the NHSC Web Site at www.bphc.hrsa.gov/nhsc/.